

# Postmortem Photographic Alteration

## 1 Scope

This document describes procedures for completing photographic alterations of images of deceased individuals by the Visual Information Specialist (VIS) within the Trace Evidence Unit (TEU). Typical requests include removing signs of trauma and debris from the facial image (e.g., blood, dirt, bruises, clouded or closed eyes), correcting image distortion, and rebuilding features to depict the person as living (e.g., opening eyes, closing mouth, adding neck and shirt). This is a generally-accepted process, and is not meant to exclude or limit the use of variations of these procedures as each situation may require.

## 2 Equipment/Materials/Reagents

Equipment and materials used may include some or all of the following, as determined by the VIS, based on the request received:

- Computer with storage, processing, and display capabilities that can handle uncompressed data.
- Computer hardware associated with image manipulation (e.g., monitor, keyboard, mouse, graphics tablet, stylus, scanner)
- Computer software (e.g., Adobe Photoshop, Macromedia Freehand, Adobe Illustrator, and Microsoft PowerPoint.)
- Public domain visual representations of logos, tattoos, jewelry, clothing, etc.
- Public domain photos of human visual elements.
- Online image databases, news sources, and magazines, etc.
- Manual drawing supplies (e.g., pencils, erasers, paper).

## 3 Standards and Controls

Not applicable.

## 4 Sampling or Sample Selection

Not applicable.

## 5 Procedures

**5.1** Review request from submitting law enforcement agency or partner.

**5.2** Conduct preliminary review of the image(s) provided, if any, by contributor to determine their usefulness. Appropriate images showing unobstructed views of the face from multiple angles will be selected by the VIS based on the quality and quantity of images

submitted and the nature of the request.

**5.3** If needed, additional imagery for either human visual elements or non-human visual elements (e.g., accessories, clothing) may be used to aid in the production of the photographic alteration. Additional imagery should be preferentially selected from FBI in-house visual reference sources. Other sources (e.g., internet, magazines, arrest photos) may be used when necessary. Identified individuals and royalty-free sources should be preferentially used. Sources of imagery, including any relevant copyright information, will be recorded in the case file.

**5.4** Selected imagery will be downloaded or scanned.

**5.5** Selected images and photo-retouching techniques will be used to produce the altered image. The technique(s) used may be manual or computer-based at the discretion of the VIS. Digital retouched images are created in Adobe Photoshop or equivalent software; however, there may be instances where the images are extracted from or delivered via other software such as FreeHand, Illustrator, or PowerPoint.

**5.6** The final image will be scanned, if hand-drawn sketch, and saved to digital media.

## **6 Records**

**6.1** An FBI *Laboratory Report* (7-1, 7-1 LIMS) will be issued by the VIS summarizing the work completed, including a statement regarding the distribution of the work product (i.e., retouched image).

**6.2** Images and/or associated media/files (e.g., photographs, electronic files) will be retained/recorded in the VIS's case file where applicable.

## **7 Calculations**

Not applicable.

## **8 Measurement Uncertainty**

Not applicable.

## **9 Limitations**

Postmortem photographic alterations are for investigative purposes, and should not be considered to be an exact likeness of the individual during life.

## **10 Safety**

Not applicable.

## **11 References**

Neville, Wesley. *Composite Protocol*, Florence County Sheriff's Office Forensic Art Protocol Manual.

*FBI Facial Identification Catalog*, Federal Bureau of Investigation Laboratory Division. 2007.  
Equipment and software specific manuals.

Rev. #	Issue Date	History
0	08/11/16	New document. Procedure previously existed in the Forensic Imaging Unit.
1	02/07/18	Updated title to reflect change from unit-specific. Updated Section 1, Scope and Section 2. Changed forensic artist to visual information specialist throughout. Added 'or Sample Selection' to Section 4 header. Updated Sections 5.2, 5.3, 5.6 and 6.1 for clarity and removed Section 5.7.

**Approval**

Redacted - Signatures on File

Trace Evidence Unit  
Chief

Date: 02/06/2018

**QA Approval**

Quality Manager

Date: 02/06/2018